

State Primary Care Grants Program for Medically Underserved Populations

Program Objective:

To improve health by making primary health care services available to Utahns with no other private or public options.

Short Description and Background:

This program supports primary care services for low income, uninsured, or underinsured individuals, who are not eligible for CHIP, Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurance. Private non-profit and public organizations are eligible to apply for funds to increase their capacity to service these populations. Funding for projects is based on a competitive application process. Most of the projects have used State funds to expand the population that can be served by existing primary care programs funded by other private or federal sources.

Program Activities and Accomplishments:

Since 1995 the Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Utah Department of Health, has assisted in funding and providing primary care services to 13, 300 clients in 21 rural Utah counties and 21,900 clients in 4 urban Utah counties to provide mental, dental, and medical services to low income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals in Utah. Since the Program's inception, an average of 4,400 individuals have been served per year. Projects funded have included community health centers, urban homeless programs, programs targeting Native Americans and individuals with diabetes, programs providing mental health and dental services, as well as school-based clinic projects.

Fiscal Implications:

Primary care services can best prevent illness, or detect and treat it early, when check-ups and follow-up visits occur regularly over time. Ongoing funding for the State Primary Care Grants program is the optimal mechanism to support a reliable primary care safety net in the State. Ongoing funding allows the existing programs to maintain their service levels in the face of inflation and to fund additional critical programs.

Contact:

Don Beckwith, Public Health Program Manager

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health

Phone: (801) 538-6113, Fax: (801) 538-6387, E-mail: dbeckwith@utah.gov

<http://health.utah.gov/primarycare/>

